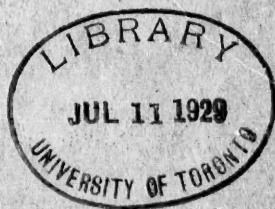


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Macdonald, (Sir) John Alexander

The late Sir John Macdonald  
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Martin Joseph Griffin.

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THE LATE SIR JOHN MACDONALD.

X

THE wave of emotion which swept over Canada on the death of Sir John Macdonald has not yet wholly subsided. The incidents of the political struggle of the session of Parliament at the very beginning of which he died have stimulated the zeal of his followers, and given them a clearer knowledge of the loss they have sustained. Thus personal feeling and political fealty join in keeping fresh the sense of regret for the loss of their old chief.

In the nature of things, there has necessarily been some subsidence of public sorrow. All the circumstances surrounding the death of the Premier tended to create a feeling that since at seventy-six death must be expected, Sir John Macdonald was fortunate in dying as Premier of his country, and in the confidence alike of the people and Parliament of Canada, and of the Parliament and Queen of Great Britain. He passed away with dignity, and dignity, in such a case, affords some alleviation to sorrow.

The life which thus closed was spent almost wholly before the public, and in the discharge of public business. Born at Glasgow in 1815, Sir John Macdonald came with his parents to Canada at an early age; was educated at Kingston; studied law, and was in due time admitted to the bar; and in 1844 entered on his long parliamentary career. A brief list of his various employments in the service of the state will indicate the variety and extent of his public life:—

Receiver-General, May 21 to December 7, 1847.

Commissioner of Crown Lands, December 8, 1847, to March 10, 1848.

In opposition, 1848 to 1854.

Attorney-General, September 11, 1854, to August 1, 1858.

Postmaster-General for one day, August 6, 1858.

Attorney-General, August 7, 1858, to May 23, 1862.

In opposition, May 23, 1862, to March 30, 1864.

Attorney-General, March 30, 1864, to July 1, 1867.

Premier of New Dominion, July 1, 1867, to November, 1873.

In opposition, November, 1873, to September, 1878.

Premier of Canada, September, 1878, to June 7, 1891.

Thus, out of his forty-seven years of parliamentary life, from 1844 to 1891, he was thirty-two years in office, most of that time leader of his party. He was only three years in public life before he was in the government; and in all he was only twelve years in opposition,—still, however, leading his party. His opponents always feared him; his friends never abandoned him in opposition; and whether in power or in opposition, he was always the most versatile and vigorous force in Canadian public affairs.

In order to make as clear as possible to the reader the conditions of public life and the questions which public men had to solve at the time when Sir John Macdonald entered public life, a brief history of political development in Canada must be given.

Among the possessions of the British crown, Canada holds a peculiar place. For Canada, the empire made a great and costly struggle alike against France and against the United States. For the empire, Canada has thrice resorted to arms—in 1775, in 1812, and in 1866—and turned the tide of invasion from the walls of Quebec and from the frontiers of Ontario. For Canada, the empire has exerted at all times its full

diplomatic strength and skill, though not always successfully, and has afforded when necessary the valuable service of her public credit. For the empire, Canada has incurred great liabilities, which, while developing Canadian territory and enlarging Canadian wealth and commerce, must inevitably be of signal service in the future defense of the Queen's dominions. India alone, among the other dependencies of the crown, has incurred great expenditure for imperial interests; but this was done, not by the spontaneous and loyal self-sacrifice of the people, but by the order of the state. In the West Indies great battles have been fought, which have made the waters surrounding those islands full of glorious historic memories; but those battles were fought by the British navy, and entailed no struggle and little sacrifice on the part of the people. In Canada, however, all efforts made for the security and the interests of the empire have been loyal, spontaneous, and helpful.

Nevertheless, the political development of Canada was slow. It did not exhibit that progress by leaps and bounds towards free political institutions which we notice in the case of the Australian colonies. These latter sprang speedily into full life and vigor because they had no long preliminary period of military rule. They were settled rapidly by men who fully understood the practice of constitutional government, and therefore constitutions were quickly conferred on them. But in the North American provinces, though some became British possessions in 1713, and all in 1763, the acquisition of political institutions of perfect freedom was long delayed. Nova Scotia did not acquire responsible government till 1848; Prince Edward Island not till 1851; New Brunswick not till 1848; Quebec not till 1841, at the time of the union of Upper and Lower Canada, and indeed it was not till the second session of the

first Parliament that responsible government was, in theory, conceded to the new Province.

The reasons for this long delay in gaining responsible government are interesting. The country was obtained by conquest or had been always maintained by arms; consequently a period of military rule was natural and necessary. The invasion of Canada from the United States in 1775 prolonged this period of military government, and indeed rendered any other government almost impossible. The loyalist immigration into Canada from 1776 to 1783, and afterward, added to the population a great number of people by no means disposed to think that political agitation of any sort was good for the peace and order of the state. The war of 1812 strengthened the military and conservative feeling again, and gave an air of treason to political designs and demands which at any other time would have been deemed worthy of serious consideration. The rebellion of 1837 stigmatized as traitors all who had joined in it, the penalties inflicted having been very severe. For these reasons, the demand made, and ultimately conceded, for responsible government was met by the fierce and determined opposition of the most influential, intelligent, and respectable men in all Canada. The opposition to responsible government did not come from British officials or the red-tapists of Downing Street. It came from within, from among the people themselves, and from the best and the wisest among them. For example, in Nova Scotia, in 1838, resolutions were passed against the proposed federal union of the Provinces on the ground that it would "imbue the rising generation with a fondness for elective institutions." In New Brunswick, in 1849, the people sustained at the polls an administration strongly opposed to responsible government.

Responsible government having, however, been granted to all the Provinces,



and the union of the two principal Provinces having been accomplished in 1841, a new field in politics was opened for public men. There were at this time three classes of men engaged in the discussion and conduct of public affairs: (1) the old-time Tories, who looked upon all demands for constitutional changes as preliminary symptoms of revolution; (2) the moderate Conservatives, who did not love change of any sort for its own sake, but who were not afraid of improvement; and (3) the Radicals, who saw in responsible government and popular institutions the promise of the golden age. The strife of these factions was rendered more intense by the fact that the governors had no accepted traditions of political conduct, and fell sometimes under the influence of one faction, sometimes under that of another, while striving to seem free from the influence of all. To Lord Durham the people of Lower Canada had been hostile. Lord Metcalfe had been unpopular in Upper Canada. Lord Elgin had been stoned in the streets of Montreal and egged in the streets of Toronto. The House of Parliament had been burned by the excited loyal mob of Montreal in revenge for the passing of the Rebellion Losses Bill. The country was a victim to partisanship, and the strife of parties was unceasing.

Mr. John Alexander Macdonald belonged to the moderate Conservative party, which he was soon to lead. The older Tories had passed or were passing away. The last of them may be said to have been Sir Allan MacNab, who was Mr. Macdonald's leader at first, and who was in a few years succeeded by his subordinate.

The questions which the leaders of public opinion had now to face were of two kinds: —

(1.) Those arising out of the conquest.

These questions had by no means disappeared. — VOL. LXVIII. — NO. 408.

appeared in 1844. The Quebec act of 1774, which conferred on the French Canadian subjects of the crown the right to the use of their own language, religion, and laws, had always excited the hostility of a considerable section of the British population. The military rule of the British, however just, — and its justice was not without flaws, — was necessarily objectionable to the French people. Hence alienation prevailed between the races, which lasted long, and which is not yet wholly extinct, — an occasional eruption reminding us of ancient explosions. This feeling rendered the government of the country as a unit very difficult; and in 1791 it was divided into two Provinces, each with a legislature of its own, and each with its own laws. Out of this state of things political questions of much local consequence arose in both Provinces. In each there was a political agitation, which resulted in 1837 in a double rebellion, which was not suppressed without blood, and which left behind it bad passions that remained long a source of disturbance. In Lower Canada the old royal grants of land to the seigneurs had in course of time become oppressive and unpopular among the tenants. In Upper Canada the reserves of land for the clergy — claimed by the English Church, and this claim denied by the nonconformist bodies — had proved a source of enduring trouble. In addition, there arose after 1837 the claims of those who had sustained losses in the rebellion. All these questions must be decided in some manner.

One after another they were disposed of. The Rebellion Losses Bill was passed in 1849 by a Liberal government. The old Conservatives and the moderate men alike offered opposition to this measure, under which, they claimed, men who had been in rebellion would be repaid for the loss arising from their rebellious action. In 1849 Mr. Macdonald was under the leadership of Sir

Allan MacNab, and he voted against this bill as a concession to his leader. It was one of the last concessions he was to make to the representatives of the old order. In 1854 Mr. Macdonald himself brought in the bill which secularized the clergy reserves in Upper Canada by dividing them amongst the municipalities, vested interests being respected during the lifetime of incumbents; and likewise the bill which abolished the seigneurial tenures of Quebec, securing fair compensation at the same time to the proprietors. The skill with which this latter question was handled has induced many of those who remember the events to believe that Sir John Macdonald was the one man in the British Empire who could have solved the land question in Ireland.

(2.) The next difficulties to be overcome were those arising out of the union of 1841.

The conditions of politics were as follows: The governors did not relinquish without a struggle the valuable patronage they had hitherto possessed. The legislative council, or upper house, was nominated by the governor, who made the appointments from a very narrow circle of Conservative public men, and a clamor arose for the election of this chamber by the people. The population of Upper Canada, owing to the influx from the United States and to the better character of the country for the purposes of agriculture, increased more rapidly than that of Lower Canada, and the Liberal leaders of the larger population demanded a larger representation in Parliament. This question was discussed with constantly increasing bitterness. The parties in the legislature were represented in the cabinet according to their provincial and racial character, and it became, in spite of every form of reasonable protest, a practice to require a majority from each Province to carry on a government "having the confidence of the legislature." Fiscal questions did

not disturb the peace of parties in those days; the political battle was fought on constitutional grounds alone.

Mr. Macdonald was one of those who in 1856 voted for the bill which made the legislative council an elective body; and it continued elective till 1867, when, on the creation of the Senate, the fathers of confederation returned, very wisely in a country where there were then and still are too many elections, to the principle of nomination by the crown for life. To the policy of representation by population advocated by the reform leaders Mr. Macdonald was opposed, because his Lower Canadian allies were opposed to it, and because he did not think that the gain in political power arising from an increased representation in Upper Canada would be any compensation for the feeling of insecurity and suspicion that would continually alarm Lower Canada, which, having been forced into the union of 1841 against its consent and with a suspended local constitution, was naturally in a supersensitive mood. Moreover, the principle of representation by population as then advocated would have perpetuated the provincial differences, which it was the object of the union to efface. Mr. Macdonald's opposition exposed him to attack in his own Province and weakened his political following, because he thereby incurred the reproach of governing Upper Canada by means of the support of the Lower Canadian members. A like accusation was made against him when, after a period of adherence by way of experiment, he abandoned the practice of having a majority in each Province to support a government. This also tended to perpetuate provincial prejudices, and he abandoned it in his endeavor to promote a substantial union of the Provinces and a substantial unity in the legislative chamber.

Up to this time, then, it will be observed by the reader who understands the science of politics that Mr. Mac-

donald, although a Conservative, acquiesced cheerfully in the passing away of practices and institutions which had served their purpose. He had abandoned the theories of the old-time Conservatives; he had assisted in the curtailment of the powers of the governors; he had voted for the election of the legislative council; he had opposed representation by population; he had given up the double majority; he had forced the settlement of the clergy reserves question; he had insisted on the arrangement of the seigniorial tenure dispute; he respected the past, but he also respected the future. He was always thinking of the next session, the next election, the next generation, the next phase of public opinion and public affairs. That the driving-wheel of the machinery of state makes large revolutions he knew very well. He was not impatient for it to come round again; but he knew it would come, and he was always ready for the opportunity it afforded.

In 1864 began the movement which ended in the confederation of the British North American Provinces. Professor Goldwin Smith, in reply to those who make claim for this or that man that he was "the father of confederation," invariably says, "*No; deadlock was the father of confederation.*" And this is what he means.

On the 16th of May, 1863, the Parliament of Canada was dissolved by Lord Monck, the reform party being in power. At the close of the session of 1863, on the 12th of May, the Governor-General, in his speech dissolving the Parliament, said in general terms:—

(1.) That it was not possible to conduct the public business in a satisfactory manner under existing circumstances.

(2.) That two successive administrations had failed to obtain the confidence of the legislature.

(3.) That these facts had made a dissolution necessary.

The causes of the troubles thus alluded to by the governor were as follows:—

On May 20, 1862, the government of Macdonald and Cartier (Conservative) was defeated, by the defection of some of Cartier's Quebec following, on the militia bill; and the ministry resigned. On May 24 the Sandfield Macdonald-Sicotte ministry was sworn into office. On May 8, 1863, in the succeeding session, Mr. John A. Macdonald carried a vote of want of confidence in this new ministry. The defeated ministers, acting within their right, advised the governor to dissolve the house, and Parliament was dissolved accordingly on the 16th of May, 1863, as above stated.

The elections were held in June, and the Liberal government was sustained by a very small majority. After a sharp parliamentary struggle, the new Liberal government, finding its position difficult to maintain, and thinking to embarrass its opponents, resigned. When two other men had declined the dangerous task of forming an administration, a member of the upper house, Sir Étienne Taché, undertook the forlorn hope and formed the second Taché-Macdonald administration, Conservative. This new government was defeated, by a vote of sixty to fifty-eight, on a test question; making the fourth ministry condemned in four years. The Governor-General gave his new and defeated ministers power to dissolve once more, a most troublesome and financially ruinous process, though perfectly regular and constitutional; but this time the dissolution did not take place.

At this critical point, when parties were so nicely balanced that neither could form a stable administration, Mr. George Brown, the reform leader, who was a sincere and able advocate of a union of all the British North American Provinces, gave it to be understood, by means of a communication to the late Hon. Alexander Morris, that he was not

unwilling to cooperate with the Conservative ministers in a coalition ministry, for the purpose of getting rid of the disturbing constitutional questions, and of forming a federal union of the Provinces. Thus the deadlock between the two parties brought about the Liberal-Conservative alliance which formed the Dominion of Canada.

But the Canadian "deadlock" would never have produced confederation had not other causes contributed materially to that result. The lower Provinces were considering a union among themselves on lines which had been laid down in an indefinite way for half a century. This was one contributing cause. Then the reciprocity treaty with the United States was about to be abolished. That was clear from the expressions of opinion in the United States, and the necessity for more interprovincial trade began to be foreseen. The Fenian invasion of 1866 gave, later on, a new impetus to the efforts of the fathers of the confederation. The need for a larger revenue, for more and more perfect public works and railways, and for a more uniform trade policy was apparent; and the wisdom of erecting a lasting bulwark of British power on this continent was clear to all Canadian public men. What was wanted at this point was a man who could take in hand the varied groups of political forces, unite them, mould them, inspire them, and give them confidence in themselves and in the future of the country. Such a man was found in Mr. John A. Macdonald, who, on the first day of July, 1867, became Premier of the Dominion, and who now, by the favor of the Queen, became Sir John Macdonald. He had at his disposal at this time the leading men of both sides of politics; for although Mr. Brown, who had taken the first step towards the coalition of parties, had withdrawn from the ministry in a short time, he was unable to check the movement in the other Provinces, and the

confederation was formed and governed at first by a union of parties.

The address which, at the close of his fortieth year in public life, was presented to Sir John Macdonald in Toronto, in 1884, contains the following paragraphs:—

"The happy results of British rule in North America, begun when the policy of Pitt was accomplished by the valor of Wolfe, would have been imperfect, if not frustrated, but for the cordial relations which you have for nearly half a century maintained, in spite of unjust and unpatriotic criticism, with the loyal men of genius who have been the chiefs of the loyal Canadians of Quebec; and on this occasion we would mingle with our felicitations to yourself a tribute of grateful remembrance of Cartier, whose statue rises in another city to bear witness to his public deeds and to keep his memory green.

"The hopes of imperial and the policy of Canadian statesmen to found a strong and lasting confederation of the British North American Provinces might have been prevented from early accomplishment but for your unselfish conduct, your generous recognition of the sincerity of political opponents, your willingness to admit to your counsels men of genius and skill when the service of the nation was paramount to the service of party. And history will recall with impartial admiration your agreement in policy and your continuance in friendship with Brown and Howe, with Hincks and McGee, representing phases of opinion which, with the quick sympathy of genius, you conciliated, at a time of crisis, to the service of the state."

In substance these are the merits which his friends claimed for Sir John Macdonald; and on the occasion in question, in the course of a long review of his public career, he took these paragraphs for his text, and accepted and detailed the views expressed in them.

The tasks which Sir John Macdonald



and Sir George Cartier and their colleagues of the Liberal-Conservative government had before them at the establishment of the Dominion of Canada in 1867 were no small ones, notwithstanding the stream of tendency which made for success and the men of experience they had in their party. In the first place, there was serious discontent in Nova Scotia with the financial terms on which that Province had been induced to enter the union. This was remedied in 1869 by an act granting a larger subsidy, and by the settlement of some minor questions relating to public works. In the next place, there was an obvious geographical incompleteness in the Dominion. This was amended with some degree of enterprise. The Northwest Territory was obtained by purchase from the Hudson Bay Company in 1870, and out of this territory the Province of Manitoba was created in the same year. In 1871 British Columbia entered the union. In 1873 Prince Edward Island was added. Finally, in 1886, the population of the Northwest Territory having rapidly increased, a species of representative government was conferred on this region; a representative act was passed, a governor was appointed, and the foundation of a regular provincial constitution established. Four districts have been outlined, namely, Assiniboia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Athabasca; three of which already send members to the House of Commons, and all of which will at no distant day form new Provinces of the Dominion.

The geographical question having been settled, there remained the fact that the means of interprovincial communication within Canadian territory were very imperfect. From the East men came to Ottawa by way of Boston. From the West they came by way of San Francisco and Chicago. In summer the St. Lawrence afforded communication with the ocean. In winter our ocean port was Portland, which the fitness of things

had decreed to belong to Canada, though Lord Ashburton was not aware of it, and Daniel Webster confessed that he did not remind him of it. The government of Sir John Macdonald undertook to supply the means of communication. The Intercolonial Railway, the first link of which had been begun by the Province of Nova Scotia, was completed in 1871, and has been made more useful still by the acquisition of portions of the Grand Trunk. Extensions of the system in Cape Breton and elsewhere in Nova Scotia have since added to the usefulness of this line, though the fact of increased communication must be offset by the fact of probable yearly deficits.

The bargain with the East having been thus liberally fulfilled, the bargain with the West, requiring the construction of the Pacific Railway, remained to be completed. This work was undertaken in 1872. The next year Sir John Macdonald fell from power, and remained out of office for nearly five years, in consequence of the revelations made concerning the subscriptions paid for political purposes by the promoters of the railway; but the Liberal government which took the place of the defeated administration went on with the work, if not on the lines of Sir John Macdonald's policy, at least on the lines which commended themselves to the practical men of the Liberal party; and the value of the work done was acknowledged by Sir John Macdonald's minister of railways when, in 1878, the Conservatives were returned to power. The work was begun by the new company organized in 1881, and was finished in 1886; an exhibition of vigorous railway management unsurpassed in the history of railways. But the government which undertook to aid the company in this gigantic task took its life in its hand every session till the work was completed; for the vastness of the undertaking alarmed the parliamentary supporters of the government, the most of

whom were not in the habit of thinking in large figures or of looking forward to future generations.

One other great work had to be done if the confederation of the Provinces was not to be a failure. This was, to diversify industry, to encourage manufactures, to develop the natural resources of the country. The necessity for this was pressing, for this reason. Before the foundation of the Dominion there were, as has been said, very imperfect means of communication, and trade had not flourished between the Provinces. The reciprocity treaty of 1854, which made the American markets free to Canadian products of certain kinds, and Canadian markets free on equal terms to American products, had checked the development of a varied industry in Canada. The abrogation of the treaty found Canada without political unity, without intercommunication, with few manufactures, and without an established foreign market. Circumstances rendered the postponement of this question of trade less disastrous than it might have been. The continuance of high prices in the United States before the resumption of specie payment enabled Canada for some years to carry on a fairly satisfactory trade with the republic, in spite of the loss of the free market. But this state of things changed about 1876. Prices went down in the United States. The manufacturers of that country became active and enterprising, particularly in seeking for their surplus a market in Canada. Agricultural products were enormously multiplied. And therefore the manufacturers, farmers, and miners of Canada began to feel the stress of this competition, especially as the Canadian tariff of only about fifteen per cent was opposed to the American tariff of about sixty.

Sir John Macdonald, in 1876, was out of power, but he and his colleagues in opposition saw an opening for a promising political campaign. It has been generally said that Sir John Macdon-

ald was always a free trader at heart. This is not so, for in 1860 he had advocated fiscal changes on the ground that they would afford protection to the labor of Canada. His chief colleague in the framing of his policy, Sir Leonard Tilley, had also as early as 1852 been a protectionist. They were consistent enough, therefore, in advocating protection in 1876, 1877, and 1878, when, after one of the most exciting of all his campaigns, Sir John Macdonald was returned to power, on a promise to promote by means of protection the agricultural, mining, and manufacturing industries of Canada. This policy was duly carried out in the tariff act of 1879, on the lines laid down in 1877 and 1878; and was sustained at the polls at the subsequent general elections of 1882, 1887, and 1891. In this last election of 1891 there was mingled, indeed, the element of a promise to negotiate, on certain restricted lines, for a renewal of reciprocal trade relations with the United States; but in the main the battle was fought on the grounds of the old policy of protection, under the old flag and the old leader. That this policy was maintained without mistakes and miscalculations, without protests and opposition of the strongest kind, no one can assert, but the government remained firm. In this election there was certainly a revolt in the Province of Ontario against protection, and in favor of perfect free trade with the United States. The knowledge of that revolt and the anxiety attendant on it impelled Sir John Macdonald, during a most inclement and dangerous season, to make such efforts in addressing the constituencies as in his feeble state of health he was unable to endure; his death was no doubt hastened by these exertions. Before he died, however, he knew that he had given strength for another parliamentary term to the trade policy he was pledged to maintain.

Some questions, indeed, he left unsettled; among these is one which caused

him at all times the most serious anxiety, since it is one which has always been a source of danger to British North American unity. It is the growth of an aggressive provincialism. The union of 1841 was effected for the purpose of putting an end to this provincial feeling, with which were mingled racial and religious prejudices. But the very means adopted to put an end to the evil were the cause, as so often happens in politics, of its perpetuation and growth. The representation of both Provinces — nay, even the representation of geographical sections of the same Province — in the cabinet; the establishment for a considerable period of the double-majority practice; the development of the agitation for representation by population, — all these things tended inevitably to perpetuate provincialism, and render unity quite out of the question. These tendencies were intensified by the maintenance — the necessary and proper maintenance, under the faith and guarantee of treaties entered into between Great Britain and France — of a separate set of laws and institutions and another language in the Province of Quebec. The establishment of the Dominion of Canada, with added territory, a larger constitution, a fuller measure of freedom in self-government, would, it was hoped, have a tendency to suppress provincialism; but provincialism has become more powerful, more aggressive, than ever. And now that death has removed the one man whose great reputation and whose incalculable personal influence could add overwhelming force to his appeals to national sentiment, the danger arising from the aggressive character of the Provinces becomes serious. Provincial representation in the cabinet, provincial representation in the public service, provincial apportionment of the expenditure, provincial grievances regarding railways and public works, provincial attacks on the stability of the federal ministry, provincial demands for the abo-

lition of the veto power, provincial interests in the arrangement of the tariff, — these are some of the characteristic dangers which menace the maintenance of what was intended by the fathers of the confederation to be a strong central government. But it is the business of statesmen to overcome difficulties; and the death of Sir John Macdonald leaves us still with men of the first rank, capable, it may be hoped, of carrying out his policy and completing his work.

At this point we may abandon for a time the direct line of development of Canadian history to examine briefly Sir John Macdonald's attitude towards Great Britain and towards the United States.

Great Britain, or, one may say, the Queen, never had a more loyal subject. In these days when personal devotion to the crown, to a constitution, even to a country, has become merely a charming legend to some, a cause of scorn and mockery to others, the chivalric devotion of Sir John Macdonald to the honor and interests of the empire and the Queen is most interesting. But at the same time he was modern in his views respecting the needs, interests, and policy of all colonies. He was conservative of the power of the crown, but he never allowed the representative of the crown in Canada to act against the advice of his responsible ministers; and when Lord Lorne, in discussing the Lettellier case in 1878-79, exerted some personal influence against his ministers, and hesitated about following their advice, Sir John Macdonald prepared a minute which was accepted by the colonial office as true constitutional doctrine, and which made it impossible thereafter for any governor of a colony to refuse to follow the advice of ministers who are guiltless of political high crimes, who have an ascertained majority in the legislature, or who are willing to go to the country on the advice which they have tendered to the crown. Having thus maintained the position of responsible ministers

against the action of the direct representative of the crown, Sir John Macdonald went further, and in the same case caused the dismissal of the representative of the representative of the crown, that is the lieutenant-governor of Quebec, for acting in a partisan manner, contrary to the advice of his provincial ministers. Again, Sir John Macdonald was devoted to imperial interests; but he forced the hands of British ministers to protect the Canadian fisheries when they were not disposed to be very active; he made it a part of necessary policy that no treaty affecting Canada, or indeed any colony possessing responsible government, shall be finally negotiated without reserving the assent of the colony to the arrangement; and above all, he made it a necessary part of imperial policy that in all negotiations concerning Canada this country shall be represented in the negotiating body. And at the time of his death it had been made, to all intents and purposes, a further part of imperial policy that none of the British colonies of America shall be permitted to make separate trade arrangements affecting in any way the interests of Canada without the consent of this country.

Respecting the great question of imperial federation now attracting so much attention and challenging so much criticism, the attitude of Sir John Macdonald was not pronounced; it was an attitude of friendly encouragement and attentive consideration. The subject was not a new one to him. In 1861, at Quebec, in discussing the question of representation, he had said: "We are fast ceasing to be a dependency, and assuming the position of an ally of Great Britain. England would be the centre, surrounded and sustained by an alliance not only with Canada, but Australia and all her other possessions; and there would thus be formed an immense confederation of freemen, — the greatest confederacy of civilized and intelligent men that ever

had an existence on the face of the globe." In 1885 he was quite as emphatic. With regard to imperial federation, he agreed that there must be something of the kind, and that, as the auxiliary nations of Canada, Australia, and South Africa increased in wealth and population, they must be willing to accept increased responsibility. Speaking on behalf of Canada, he declared that she was willing, and that she would be prepared, to join the mother country in an offensive and defensive league for the maintenance of the empire and flag of Great Britain. It has been asked why Canada should mix herself up with the conflict of nations. Her answer was, that blood was thicker than water, and that her people were Englishmen, Scotchmen, and Irishmen, far removed from the centre, it might be, but still clinging to the mother country. He was by no means rashly committed to any particular scheme of union; but there are the strongest reasons for believing that, had he lived, Sir John Macdonald would have been found upon the side of those who think that the trade of the British Empire needs guarding, consolidating, and extending under a system of general imperial policy which would provide for its protection. It may also be said on authority that, had Lord Beaconsfield lived, he and Sir John Macdonald would have been jointly engaged in populating and developing the northwest of Canada, and in promoting the imperial usefulness of the Intercolonial and Canadian Pacific railways. The policy was begun in 1879 or 1880; for, after a visit which Sir John Macdonald paid to Hughenden, Lord Beaconsfield made, at Bucks, the first of what he intended to be a series of speeches advocating the encouragement of emigration from the United Kingdom into the "illimitable prairies" of the Canadian Northwest.

In regard to the United States there were only two great questions which caused Sir John Macdonald to have any



policy at all; and these were, the trade question and the fisheries question. Sir John Macdonald's attitude had always been conciliatory in discussing the former. He was the ablest member of the government which accepted and ratified the treaty of 1854, negotiated at Washington by Lord Elgin and Sir Francis Hincks. It was Sir John Macdonald who set on foot all but one of the attempts which were made to effect a renewal of that treaty when, in 1866, it was abrogated in what must now be considered a fit of unwarranted petulance at what was mistakenly called the unfriendly character of Canadian action in the civil war. In 1865, when notice of abrogation had been given, a deputation was sent from the various Provinces to have the treaty renewed, if possible. In 1868 the first customs act of Canada contained a clause offering reciprocal trade whenever the United States was willing. In 1869 another attempt at negotiation was made, but owing to the continuance of unfriendly feeling in Congress the attempt utterly failed. In 1871, when the Washington treaty was being arranged, proposals for a renewal of the treaty of 1854 were made by Sir John Macdonald; but he was answered that it was impracticable; it "would not be in accordance with the views of the people of the United States." In 1872 Sir John Macdonald's government, in reply to resolutions of the Dominion Board of Trade, based on resolutions of the National Board of Trade of the United States, stated again its perfect willingness to enter on negotiations for reciprocity. In 1874 Mr. George Brown and Sir Edward Thornton arranged for a treaty, but the Senate would not even discuss it. In 1879, when the new national policy was adopted, the customs act again contained a clause making reciprocity in certain natural products dependent on the willingness of the United States. In 1887, when the fishery treaty was under discussion, a new attempt was made

by the Canadian officials to arrange for reciprocal trade relations; but this attempt was also in vain. Finally, in April, 1891, a proposition was made, the terms and conditions of which are matter of dispute as yet, for a meeting at Washington to discuss the trade relations of Canada and the United States. Sir John Macdonald did not live to take more than the initiative step in the negotiation, but it may be positively stated that he had the utmost confidence in some friendly arrangement which would remove all causes of dispute between these two countries.

The friendly policy which Sir John Macdonald pursued in relation to trade matters he was not unwilling to pursue in regard to the fisheries. That had always been, and continues still to be, an affair with which the ministers from the Maritime Provinces have most to do. But Sir John Macdonald never for a moment wavered in his determination that the historical view of British and Canadian interests in the fisheries should be maintained, and that the prime postulates of international law regarding the territorial rights of nations over the waters surrounding their coasts should be enforced. Yet he was ready at all times to negotiate for the free use of those fisheries and for the suspension of the rules of law on terms of friendly reciprocity. He had no hostility to the United States; he was hostile only to certain phases of American policy and certain moods of American opinion which threatened the interests or the allegiance of Canadians; and to these he was determinedly opposed. No citizen of the United States who has studied the history of the two countries can fail to see that a Canadian may reasonably entertain doubts upon the subject of the friendliness and fair play extended to Canada by the republic. It does not require extreme sensitiveness to believe that in 1837 some encouragement was given to the rebels along the border; that in 1866

the Fenian invasion was allowed to ripen in perfect security till it burst, however feebly, on Canadian borders; that no respect has ever been paid to the territorial rights of Canada on the waters along our coasts; and it is a matter of record that an unfriendly and threatening resolution was passed in 1867 in the House of Representatives when the Dominion of Canada was founded. These facts will suffice to justify a reasonable amount of caution and reserve on the part of a statesman who had had half a century's experience of these unpleasing and disturbing affairs.

In conclusion, one may briefly touch on that most interesting yet most difficult subject, the personal character of Sir John Macdonald. Probably no man on this continent was more familiar to the people than was Sir John Macdonald. His picture, whether in caricature or otherwise, had become the possession of the whole country, and no one in Canada could meet him in any place, even in the remotest backwoods, without knowing that he was Sir John Macdonald. He knew personally a surprising number of people, and stories are often told of his memory for faces he had not seen for forty years, and had then only encountered at a political meeting. He had addressed at various times almost every constituency in Canada, east and west, and no man within driving distance would miss the opportunity of hearing "John A."

He was delightfully convivial in private life, and for more than forty years had mingled socially on familiar terms with his followers. It cannot be said that since 1867, however, he had made any attempt to be on familiar terms with his opponents. Political feeling and personal feeling ran very high at times; and though he never said anything on the subject, it was plain that, as a general rule, he preferred to maintain an attitude of reserve with the majority of his opponents. Occasionally

this was to be regretted; but he had his own reasons, which were respected, for his conduct, and he did not enforce his example on his colleagues. His conversation was marvelously variable, running from the gravest to the gayest subjects with the ease of a man who "ran through each mode of the lyre, and was master of all." He was full of anecdotes, and used them freely in conversation and in his speeches. In the nature of things, some of these stories got old like himself; but we were always quite ready to laugh at "the grouse in the gun-room," for the sake of the old chief and the old times when we heard it first.

But there was one subject above all others that he loved to talk of, and that was the political history and literature of the eighteenth century in England. On that subject he knew, doubtless, as much as any man living. Lord Beaconsfield, who was also a devotee of that splendid literature, was delighted with Sir John Macdonald's taste in this respect; and in conversation told him, apropos of his familiarity with the premiers, that probably there was no man in England, except Spencer Walpole, who was writing a book on the subject, who could repeat without mistake the names of all the premiers since Pitt. Sir John Macdonald could do that and much more. There was no volume of political memoirs of that century which he had not read. All his leisure was passed in reading, for he was not a devotee of exercise, and seemed seldom to need it. He liked to read and to talk of books with men who loved them. All kinds of books were welcome to him. He frequently read novels, and enjoyed Howells, Black, Hardy, Blackmore, and Besant. He had a keen liking for poetry, especially ballad poetry, and all political poetry was familiar to him. A quotation from the *Anti-Jacobin* could not pass his ear without recognition; a line from the *Noctes Ambrosianæ*

would quicken his attention at once, and he would give the following line.

It is very difficult to describe his oratory. He was a master of all the arts of public speaking except that of being eloquent, if in these days this is an art of any value. He debated with great skill; and he preferred brief speeches, though he could, and occasionally did, speak for hours at a time. His manner was at times hesitating, but not from want of matter, for he never rushed into a debate without preparation, and he knew always how to obtain accurate facts at the shortest notice; in this respect his officers and secretaries served him with conspicuous fidelity. He could be humorous; he could be pathetic; he could make dignified and touching appeals to loyalty to the crown, to the party, to himself. Before a crowd on the hustings he was unrivaled in the deadly dexterity of his criticism, his humor, his appeals to popular interests. It was, of course, in the House of Commons that he was always at his best; and his respect for the traditions of the house, the rules of the house, the kind of conduct most likely to touch and please and lead the house, was almost inspired.

He succeeded in keeping together for a quarter of a century a political party singularly composed of English, French, Irish, Scotch, of Catholics and Protestants, of Orangemen and Home Rulers, of old family-compact Tories and sharp democratic labor agitators: and all these men had mingled during his life on terms of such friendly fidelity to the Old Man that it will be some time before they remember that they have serious differences of opinion; the habit of

acting together will remain with them for some years, at least. The clergy were largely on his side, and he had a strong party among what may be called the academic classes. The reason for this adherence to him of the clergy and the professors was probably to be found in the fact that in all things religious he was known to be a sound thinker; he had no tolerance for the "scientific" view of man's destiny and origin; the agnostic spirit of the age did not touch him. This "orthodox" habit of mind and the well-known taste he exhibited for an intellectual life and for historical and literary studies gave him a command of the clerical and academic forces which added much to his strength.

The loss of Sir John Macdonald leaves his party weaker and his country more or less in doubt about the immediate political future. But other men will follow in his footsteps, and indeed other men are carrying on his policy and perfecting his measures, with what success we shall not know till the next general election. The old chief had faults; he often admitted them; but it is not yet time to count them over. He made mistakes; these he also would refer to, though, like other men, he naturally preferred to have them regarded as strokes of genius; but we need not dwell upon them now,—it is so short a time since his hand on the shoulder, his touch on the palm, could thrill the feudal blood of his followers with somewhat of the tribal loyalty of the Highlands; and in this discussion of his career perhaps the reader will pardon the impossibility of writing without the sense of his presence and of the sound of his voice.

*Martin J. Griffin.*